

## ENVIRONMENTAL HOT TOPICS

By Eleanor Jacobs

This month's The Manager from PRO-DAIRY brings you the latest info on a range of hot-topic environmental issues. How does your dairy stack up?

## INSIDE

What's your dairy's environmental IQ  
page 21

Are TMDLs in your future?  
page 22

Is dairy a carbon Bigfoot?  
page 24

Dairy air emissions update  
page 26

Don't cry over spilled manure; fix the problem  
page 28

Winter spreading, a manure management option  
page 30

Vermont's Cow Power is a success  
page 32

Small farm anaerobic digestion: What's holding it back?  
page 34

# What's your dairy's environmental IQ?

**Talk about a moving target.** Environmental regulations – and regulators' expectations of what dairy farmers must do to meet them – seem to change quicker than the weather. It's frustrating, of course. Just when you think you've nailed the requirements for a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation, for example, they're tweaked. Or a whole new concern rears its head. One such issue is a "pollution diet" for water bodies, called total maximum daily load, covered in this month's The Manager, by PRO-DAIRY.

Currently, the issue of total maximum daily loads zeroes in on the Chesapeake Bay watershed. So why should you care if you don't farm near the Bay or in its watershed, asks author Karl Czymmek? For one reason – and maybe not the most important one – history of environmental regulations shows that you never know where they're headed and what you'll be required to do.

A more important reason is, of course, dairy farmers' need and desire to be thoughtful stewards of their resources. PRO-DAIRY lays out some ways – large and small – that you can do this. In this

issue, authors from Cornell University, the Central Vermont Public Service Corp. and NRCS also provide updates on such topics as overtopped manure storages, dairy air emissions, dairying's carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions.

## Ahead of the curve

No matter where you dairy, there are some practical steps you can take to keep your business on sound environmental ground:

- Continually evaluate the environmental risks your dairy poses, especially relating to manure and fertilizer management practices.
- Know who to go to for guidance on environmental issues. And don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Consider technology, such as anaerobic digesters, to address environmental concerns where possible. You'll read about how this technology can fit on small and large dairies.
- Use manure as the primary fertilizer source. Test it and your soils for nutrient levels.

This is just a sampling of the sound advice in The Manager this month. Read on. □



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